



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OCT 11 2016

OFFICE OF
ENFORCEMENT AND
COMPLIANCE ASSURANCE

LCDR M. Murnane
SURTASS LFA Sonar SEIS/SOEIS Program Manager
4350 Fairfax Drive, Suite 600
Arlington, Virginia 22203

Dear Sir/Madam:

In accordance with our responsibilities under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the U.S. Navy's draft supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/OEIS) for the Surveillance Towed Array Sensor System Low Frequency Active (SURTASS LFA) Sonar for Routine Training, Testing, and Military Operations (CEQ No. 20160192).

The Navy evaluated the potential environmental impacts of continued employment of up to four SURTASS LFA sonar systems in the Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian oceans and the Mediterranean Sea. The draft supplemental EIS/OEIS provided additional information on the marine water resources (ambient noise environment) and biological resources. The alternatives considered included maintaining the geographical restrictions to sonar received levels within: 1) known recreational and commercial dive sites; 2) 12 nautical miles of any land; and 3) offshore biologically important areas (OBIA) during their respective effective periods when significant biological activity occurs. Additionally, six new potential OBIA's and the expansion of five existing OBIA's were approved and will be implemented as part of the proposed action, bringing a total comprehensive list of 28 OBIA's. The Navy's preferred alternative will reduce sonar transmission hours from 432 hours per vessel per year to no more than 255 hours per vessel per year.

EPA has rated the draft supplemental EIS/OEIS as LO – "Lack of Objections." A summary of EPA's rating is enclosed.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this draft supplemental EIS/OEIS, and look forward to reviewing the final supplemental EIS/OEIS related to this project. My point of contact for this review is Candi Schaedle at (202) 564-6121.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Robert Tomiak", is written over a horizontal line.

Robert Tomiak
Director
Office of Federal Activities

Enclosure